



Uterine Cancer ...

What Women Need to Know

What are the signs of uterine (endometrial) cancer?

- Bleeding or spotting from your uterus or vagina that is not normal
- Discharge from your vagina, especially after menopause
- Bloating, cramping or feeling full in your pelvis
- Weight loss or gain that you can't explain
- A lump in your pelvis

What adds to my risk of getting uterine cancer?

- One of the biggest risk factors in the most common type of uterine cancer is too much exposure to the hormone estrogen. Women may get too much estrogen from:
 - ~ estrogen replacement therapy
 - ~ an early first period
 - ~ late menopause
 - ~ not giving birth
 - ~ not being able to get pregnant
- All of these things are thought to increase your risk of getting uterine cancer.

- Other things that increase your risk for uterine cancer include:
 - ~ diabetes
 - ~ gall bladder disease
 - ~ high blood pressure
 - ~ being overweight
- One way to reduce the added risk from estrogen replacement therapy is to add the hormone progesterone to the therapy.
- Getting pregnant or using birth control pills appear to protect against cancer of the uterus lining.
- Some women with a family history of colon cancer also may be more likely to get ovarian cancer and cancer of the lining of the uterus.

How can I detect uterine cancer early?

- Women 40 and over should get an annual pelvic exam. Younger women should have a pelvic exam at the same time as their Pap test for cervical cancer.
- Women at high risk for uterine cancer should get a special test, called a biopsy, of the inner lining of the uterus. Women should get this test at menopause and at regular times afterward. A doctor will determine how often you should get a biopsy.

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- The Pap test is very good at finding early cancer of the cervix, but it hardly ever finds early stages of uterine cancer.

How do you treat uterine cancer?

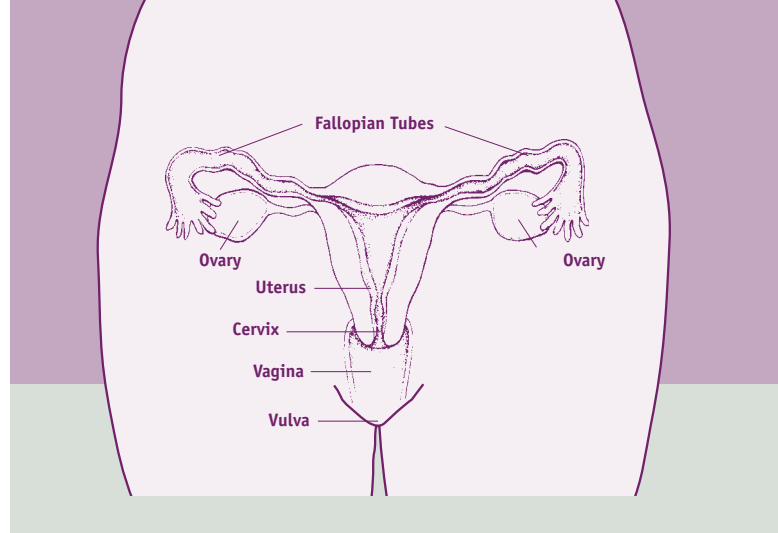
Doctors treat uterine cancers with surgery, radiation, hormones, and/or chemotherapy. The treatment depends on the stage of cancer (how far it has spread).

What are my chances of survival?

- More than nine out of 10 women (93 percent) survive at least one year after uterine cancer is found.
- Ninety-five percent of women survive at least five years if the cancer is found early.
- Nearly two out of three women (64 percent) survive at least five years if the cancer has spread to nearby tissues.



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How many women will get uterine cancer this year?

The California Cancer Registry estimates that 3,420 new cases of uterine cancer will occur in the year 2000 in women in California.

The California Cancer Registry estimates that 595 women will die from uterine cancer in the year 2000.

*Source: California Cancer Registry (CDHS/CSS)
American Cancer Society Cancer Facts & Figures 2000*

Additional copies of this pamphlet may be downloaded at Department of Health Services—Office of Women's Health web site: www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh or obtained by fax at (916) 653-3535.

Gray Davis, Governor
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Diana M. Bontá, R.N., Dr.P.H., Director
Department of Health Services



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